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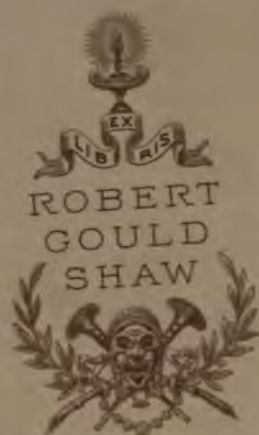
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A Suabian  
Miracle Rhyme

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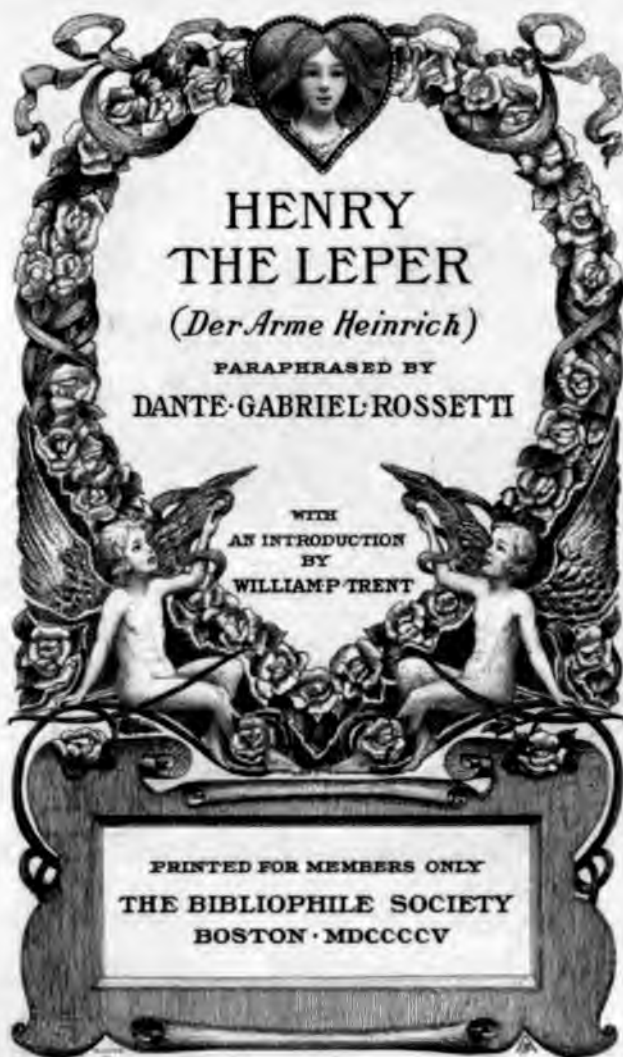






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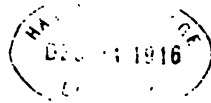
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Hartmann, von Aue.

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250. What's  
Thank ya.  
I am projecting  
have?

Yours  
affectionately  
D. G. Roper  
Thursday  
My dear Brown  
I am sorry to say  
that Lizzie is very  
unwell today &  
keeping her bed, so  
that I see little chance  
of our being able  
to come this evening  
though we shall if  
at all possible, but I  
write in case I am  
very sorry, but you  
see we must make  
no appointments  
How many copies  
of the circular do  
you think I ought to





Henry the Leper :  
A Swabian Miracle-rhyme :  
by Hartmann von ~~Aue~~ Aue, (11-1200)

Hartmann von Aue, the fame went,  
Was a good knight, and well acquint  
With books in every character.

Having sought this many a year,  
He found at length a record, yet,  
As far as he apprehendeth it,  
To smooth the tugged paths uneven,  
To glorify God which is in Heaven,  
And gain kind thoughts from each true heart  
For himself as also for his art

Unto your ears this song sings he,  
And begs, ~~and~~ an you hear it patiently,  
That his reward be held in store;  
And that whoso, when his days are o'er,  
Shall read and understand this book,  
For the writer unto God may look,  
Prayer that God may be his goal  
And the place of rest to his poor soul.

That man his proper shrift shall win  
Who prayeth for his brother's sin.



## Part I

Once on a time, (rhymeth the rhyme.)  
In Suabia-land once on a time  
There was a nobleman sojourning,  
Unto whose nobleness everything  
Of virtue and high-hearted excellence  
Worthy his line and his large pretence,  
With plentiful measure was meted out:  
The land rejoiced in him round about.  
He was like a prince in his governing, -  
In his wealth he was like a king;  
But most of all by the fame far-flown  
Of his great knightliness was he known  
North and south upon land and sea.  
By his name he was Henry of the Lea  
All things whereby the truth grew dim  
Were held as hateful foes with him:  
By solemn oath was he bounden, fast  
To shun them while his life should last.  
In honour all his days went by.  
Therefore his soul might look up high  
To honorable authority.



A paragon of all gracesonefs;  
A blooming branch of youthfulness;  
A looking-glass to the world around;  
A stainless and priceless diamond;  
Of gallant 'haviour a beautiful wreath;  
At home when the tyrant menaceth;  
A buckler to the breast of his friend,  
And courteous without measure or end;  
Whose deeds of arms 'twere long to tell;  
Of precious wisdom a limpid well;  
A singer of ladies every one;  
And very lordly to look upon  
In feature and bearing and countenance;  
Say, failed he in anything, perchance,  
The summit of all glory to gain  
And the lasting honour of all men?

Alack! the soul that was up so high  
Dropped down into pitiful misery, -  
The lofty courage was stricken low, -  
The steady triumph stumbled in woe, -  
And the world-joy was hidden in the dust,  
Even as all such shall be and must.



He whose life in the senses centreth  
Is already in the shadow of death.  
The joys, called great, of this under-state  
Burn up the bosom early and late;  
And their shining is all-together vain,  
For it bringeth anguish and trouble and pain.  
The torch that ~~burns~~<sup>flames</sup> for men to see  
And wasteth to ashes inwardly  
Is verily but an imaging  
Of man's own life, the piteous thing.  
The whole is brittleness and mishap:  
We sit and dally in Fortune's lap  
Till tears break in our smiles behixt,  
And this shallow honey-draught be mix'd  
With sorrow's wormwood fullon-deep:  
Oh! rest not therefore, Man, nor sleep:—  
In the blooming of thy flower-crown  
A sword is raised to smite thee down.

Even with Earl Henry it was thus:  
Though gladome and very glorious  
Was the manner of his life, yet God

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Upon his spirits' fulness trod,  
~~The curse that fell was heavy and deep, -~~  
~~The burden was heavy that lay on him -~~  
A Thunderbolt in the ~~shower~~ <sup>hour of sleep.</sup>  
His body, whose beauty was so much,  
Was turned ~~to~~ <sup>unto</sup> loathing and reproach,  
Full of foul sores, increasing fast,  
Which grew into leprosy at last.  
Ages ago the Lord even so  
Ordained that Job should be brought low,  
To prove him if in such distress  
He would hold fast his righteousness.  
The great rich Earl, who otherwhile  
Met but man's praise and woman's smile,  
Was now no less than outthrust quite.  
The day of the world hath a dark night.

What time Lord Henry wholly knew  
The storm that he was come into,  
And saw folk shun him as he went  
And his panis food for merriment, -  
Then did he as often it is done  
By those whom sorrow fallith on, -  
He wrapped not round him as a robe



The patience that was found in Job.  
For holy Job meet resemblance took  
And bowed him under God's rebuke,  
Which had given to him the world's reverse,  
And the shame, and the anguish, and the curse,  
Only to snatch away his soul  
From emptiness and earth's control:  
Therefore his soul had triumphing  
Inmost at the terrible thing.

In suchwise Henry bore him not;  
His discourtesy his heart forgot;  
His pride waxed hard and kept its place,  
But the glory departed from his face,  
And that which was his strength grew weak.  
The hand that smote him on the cheek  
Was all too heavy. It was night  
Now, and his sun withdrew its light.  
To the pride of his uplifted thought  
Much woe the weary knowledge brought  
That the pleasant way his feet did send  
~~Was all his joys in their best day~~  
~~Was all his joys in their best day~~  
~~Was all his joys in their best day~~  
~~Was all his joys in their best day~~  
The day wherein his years had begun  
Went in his mouth with a malison.



As the ill grew stronger and more strong,  
There was but hope bore him along:  
Even yet to hope he was full fain  
That gold might help him back again  
Thither whence God had cast him out.  
Ah! weak to strive and little stout  
'Gainst Heaven the strength that he possessed.  
North and South and east and west,  
Far and wide from every side,  
Mediciners well-proved and tried  
Came to him at the voice of his woe;  
But, mused and pondered they ever so,  
They could but say, for all their care,  
That he must be content to bear  
The burthen of the anger of God:  
For him there was none other road.  
Already was his heart nigh down,  
When yet to him one chance was shown;  
For in Salerno ~~there~~ dwelt (folk said)  
A leech who still might lend him aid,  
Albeit unto his body's cure  
All such had been as-naught before.



Up rose fresh-hearted the sick man,  
And sought the great physician,  
And told him all, and prayed him hard,  
With the proffer of a rich reward,  
To take away his griefs' foul cause.  
Then said the leech without a pause:  
"There is one means might healing yield,  
Yet will you ever be unheald."

And Henry said: "Say on; define  
Your thoughts; your words are as thick wine.  
Some means may bring recovery? —  
I will recover! Verily,  
Unto your will my will shall bend,  
So this mine anguish pass and end."

Then said the leech: "Give ear to me:  
Thus stands it with your misery.  
Albeit there be a means of health,  
From no man shall you win such wealth;  
Many have it, yet none will give;  
You shall lack it all the days you shall live;





Strength gets it not; valour gains it not;  
Nor with gold nor with silver is it bought.  
Then, since God heareth not your plaint,  
Accept Gods' will and be content."

"Woe's me!" Did Henry's speech begin;  
"Your pasture do you take herein,  
To snatch the last hope from my sight?  
Riches are mine, and mine is might:—  
Why cast away such golden chance  
As waiteth on my deliverance?  
You shall grow rich in succouring me:  
Tell me this means, what they may be."

Quoth the leech: "Then know them, what they <sup>are</sup>;  
Yet still all hope must stand afar.  
Truly if the cure for your care  
Might be gotten anyway anywhere,  
Did it hide in the furthest parts of earth,  
Thither I had not sent you forth.  
But all my knowledge hath gone awry;  
There is but one thing would not fail:—  
An innocent virgin for to find,

● ● ● ● ● ●

Chaste, and modest, and pure in mind,  
Who, to save you from death, might choose  
Her own young body's life to lose:  
The heart's blood of the excellent maid,  
That and naught else can be your aid.  
But there is none will be won thereby  
For the love of another's life to die."

'Twas then poor Henry knew indeed  
That from his ill he might not be freed;  
Sith that no woman he might win  
Of her own will to act herein.  
Thus gat he but an ill return  
For the journey he made unto Salerno,  
And the hope he had upon that day  
Was snatched from him and sent away.  
Homeward he hied him back: full fain  
His limbs in the dust he would have lain.  
Of his substance - lands and riches both -  
He rid himself; even as one doth  
Who the breath of the last life of his hope  
Once and for ever hath rendered up.  
To his friends he gave ~~some~~ and to the poor;



Unto God praying evermore  
The spirit that was in him to save  
And make his bed soft in the grave.  
What still remained, aside he set  
For Holy Church's benefit.  
Of all that heretofore was his  
Nought held he for himself, Jewis,  
Save one small house, with ~~land~~<sup>byre</sup> and field.  
There from the world he lived concealing,  
There lived he, and awaited Death,  
Who, being awaited, lingereth.  
Pity and ruth his troubles found  
Away through all the country round.  
Who heard him named had sorrow deep  
And for his pitious sake would weep.



## Part II

The little farm, with head and field,  
Now, as it had been erst, was till'd  
By a poor man of simple make  
Whose heart right seldom had the ache.  
A happy soul, and well content  
With every chance that fortune sent;  
Being equal in fortune's pitch  
Even unto him that is rich, -  
For that his master's kindly will  
Set limit to his labour still,  
And without cumbrance and in peace  
He lived upon the field's increase.  
With him poor Henry trouble-pref'd  
Dwelt, and to dwell with him was rest.  
In grateful wise, neglecting nought,  
Still was the peasant's service wrought:  
Cheerily both in heart and look  
The tumble and the toil he took,  
Which, new as each day dawned anew,  
For Henry he must bear and do.

With favour which to blessings ran





God looked upon the worthy man:  
He gave him strength to aid his life,  
A sturdy heart, an honest wife,  
And children such as bring to be  
That a man's breast is brimmed with glee.  
Among them was a little maid,  
Red-cheeked, in yellow locks arrayed;  
Whose tenth year was just passing her;  
With eyes most innocently clear,  
Sweet smiles that ~~shone~~<sup>soothe</sup>, sweet tones that fell;  
Of gracious semblance wonderful.

For her sick lord the dear good child  
Was full of tender thoughts and mild.  
Rarely from sitting at his feet  
She rose; because his speech was sweet  
To serve him she was proud and glad.  
Great fear her little playmates had  
At the sight of the loathly wight;  
But she, as often as she might,  
Went to him and with him would stay;  
And her heart into him always  
Clave as a child's heart cleaves: his pain

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And grief that ever must remain,  
With childish grace she soothed the while;  
And sat her at his feet with a smile.

And Henry loved the little one  
Who had such thought his woes upon,  
And he would buy her baubles bright  
Such as to children give delight:  
Nought else to peace his heart could life  
Like her innocent gladness at the gift.  
A ribbon sometimes, broad and fair,  
To twine with the tresses of her hair,  
Or a looking-glass, or a little ring,  
Or a girdle-clasp; — ~~at anything~~.  
She was so thankful, was so pleased,  
That in some sort his pain was eased,  
And he would even say jestingly,  
His own good little wife was she.  
Seldom she left him long alone,  
Winning him from his inward moan  
With love and childish trustfulness;  
Her joyous seeming ne'er grew less;  
She was a balm unto his breast; —



Unto his eyes she was shade and rest.

Already were three years outworn,  
And still his torment o'er him hung,  
And still in death ceased not his life.

It chanced the peasant and his wife,  
And his two little daughters, sate  
Together when the day was late.  
Their talk was all upon their lord,  
And how the help they could afford  
Was joy to them, and of the woe  
They suffered for his sake, - yet how  
His death, they feared, might bring them worse.  
They thought that in the universe  
No lord could be so good as he,  
And if but once they lived to see  
Another inherit of their friend,  
That all their welfare needs must end.

Then to his lord the peasant spake:  
"Question, dear master, I would make,  
So you permit me, of the cause



Wherefore thus long you have made pence  
From seeking help from such as win  
Worship by love of medicine  
And famous are both near and far.  
One such might yet break down the bar  
That shuts you from your health's estate.  
Wherefore, dear master, should you wait.

Then sighs from the soul of the sick man.  
Preped outward, and his tears began;  
They were so sore, that when he spake  
It seemed as though his heart would break.

"From God this woful curse," he said,  
Wofully have I merited,  
Whose mind but to wold-vanity  
Looked, and but thought how best to be  
Wondrous in the thinking of men:  
Worship I laboured to attain  
By wealth, which God in His great views  
Had given me for another use:—  
God's self I had well-nigh forgot,  
The moulder of my human lot,





Whose gifts, ill taken though well bestow'd,  
Hindered me from the Heaven-road;  
Till I at length, lost here as there,  
Am chosen unto shame & despair.  
His wrath's insufferable weight  
Made me to know Him, — but too late.  
From bad to worse, from worse to worst,  
At length I am cast forth and curs'd:  
The whole world from my side doth flee;  
The wretchedest insulteth me;  
Looking on me, each ruffian  
Accounts himself the better man,  
And turns his visage from the sight,  
As though I brought him bane and blight.  
Therefore may God reward thee, thou  
Who dost bear with me even now,  
Not scorning him whose sore distress  
No more may guardan faithfulnes.  
And yet, however kind and true  
The deeds thy goodness bids thee do, —  
Still, spite of all, it must at heart  
Rejoice thee when my breath shall part.  
How am I <sup>outcast</sup> ~~exposed~~ and <sup>forlorn!</sup> ~~wretched~~!



That I, who as Thy Lord was born,  
Must now beseech Thee of Thy grace  
To suffer me in mine evil case.

With a great blessing verily  
Thou shalt be blest of God through me,  
Because to me, whom God thus tries,  
Pity Thou grantest, Christianwise.

The thing Thou askest Thou shalt know:—  
All the physicians long ago,  
Who might bring help in any kind,  
I sought;—but, woe is me! to find  
That all the help in all the earth  
Avails not and is nothing worth.

One means there is indeed; and yet  
That means nor gold nor prayers may get.  
A leech who is full of love hath said

How it needeth that a virtuous maid  
For my sake with her life should part,  
And feel the steel cut to her heart:

Only in the blood of such an one  
My curse may cease beneath the Sun.  
But such an one what hope can have,  
Who her own life would thus forego.



To save my life? - Then let despair  
Bow down within my soul to bear  
The wrath God's justice doth up-pile.  
When will Death come? Woe, woe the while!!

Of these, poor Henry's words, each word  
The little maiden likewise heard  
Who at his feet would always sit;  
And forgot it not, but remembered it.  
In the hid shrine, her heart's recess,  
She held his words in silence.  
As the mind of an angel was her mind,  
Grave and holy and Christ-inclin'd.

When in their chamber, Day being past,  
Her parents, after toil, slept fast, -  
Then always with the self-same stir  
The sighs of her grief troubled her.  
At the foot of her parents' bed  
Lying, so many tears she shed  
(Bitter and many) as to make  
That they woke up and kept awake.



Her secret grieving once perceived,  
They made much marvel why she grieved,  
And questioned her of the evil chance  
To which she gave sorrowful utterance  
In her sobbings and in her undereries:  
But nothing answered she anywise,  
Until her father bade her tell  
Openly and truly and well  
Why night by night within her bed  
So many bitter tears she shed.  
"Alack!" quoth she, "what should it be  
But our kind master's misery, —  
With thoughts how soon we now must miss  
Both him and all our happiness?  
Our solace shall be ours no more:  
There is no lord alive, be sure,  
Who, like unto him and of his worth,  
Shall bless our days with peace thenceforth."

They answering said: "Right words and true  
Thou speak'st; but it beseemeth not an heir  
That we should make outcry and lament.  
Brood then no longer thereabout."





Unto us it is pain as unto thee,  
Purchance even more; yet what can we  
That may avail for succouring?  
Truly The Lord hath done this thing."

Thus silenced they her speaking; but  
Her soul's complaint they silenced not.  
Grief lay with her from hour to hour  
Through the long night; nor dawn had power  
To rid her of it; all beside  
That near and about her night beside  
Seemed nought. And when sleep covered her,  
Again and again and yet again,  
Wakeful and faithful, she would crouch  
Wearily on her little couch,  
Tossing in trouble without sign:  
And from her eyes the scalding brine  
Flowed through sick grief that wept apart;  
As steadfastly within her heart  
She pondered on her heart's sore ache  
And on those words Paul Henry spake.  
Long with herself communing so,  
Her tears were softened in their flow;



Because at length her will was fix'd  
To stand his fate and him betwixt.

Where now should such a child be sought,  
Thinking even as this one thought,  
Who, rather than her lord should die,  
Chose her own death and held thereby?

But once her purpose settled fast,  
All was went forth from her and pass'd;  
Her heart sat lightly in her breast,  
And one thing only gave unrest.  
Her lord's own hand, she feared, might stay  
Her footsteps from the terrible way, —  
She feared her parents strength might lack,  
And, through much loving, hold her back.

By reason of such fears, she fell  
Into new grief unspeakable,  
And that night, as the past night, wept,  
Waking her father where he slept.  
"Thou foolish child," (thus did he say),  
"Why wilt thou weep thine eyes away



For what no help thou hast can mend?  
Is not this moan thou mak'st to end?  
We would sleep; let us sleep in peace!  
Thus chidingly he bade her cease,  
Because his thought conceived in rage  
The thing she had laid up in her thought.

Answered him the excellent maid:  
"Truly my own dear lord hath said  
That by one means he may be healed  
So ye but your consenting yield,  
It is my blood that he shall have.  
I, (being virgin-pure,) to save  
His days, do choose the edge o' the knife  
And my death rather than my life."

The young girl's parents lay and heard,  
And had sore grief of her spoken word;  
And thus her father said: "How now?  
What silly wish, child, wishest thou?  
Then durst not do it in very truth.  
What knows a child of these things, forsooth  
Ugly Death thou hast never seen:"



Were he once to near thee, I ween, —  
Didst thou view the pit of the sepulchre, —  
Thy face would change and thy flesh fear,  
And thy soul within thee would shake,  
And thy weak hands would toil to break  
The grasp of the monster foul and grim  
Drawing thee from thyself to him.  
Leave thy words and thy weeping too;  
What cannot be done, seek not to do."

"Nay, father mine," replied the child,  
"Though my words may be counted wild,  
Will I know that the body's death  
Is a torture and tortureth."

Yet truly this is truth no less:  
He who is plagued with sharp distress,  
Who hates his life, having but woe, —  
To him the end cometh, even so,  
When, for all the curses that he hath heaped  
He escapes not the curse of death at last.  
What booteth it him a long-drawn life  
To have traversed in trouble and in strife,  
If nothing after all he can win,





Except, being old, to enter in  
At the self-same door which years ago  
He might more firmly have passed through  
But scanty may the soul be good, -  
So rough is world-driving and so rude,  
And, good once ended, hope once born,  
Best it were I had not been born.  
Therefore my lips give praise to God,  
Who this great blessing hath bestowed  
On me, - by loss of body and limb  
To have the life that lives with Him  
'Twere ill done, did ~~He~~ make me loathe  
From what unto me and unto God  
Bringeth joy and prosperity;  
Gaining the crown of Christ for me  
And ~~you~~ from every troublesome thing  
That threatneth you, delivering.  
The generous master ye shall keep  
Who leaves you undisturbed to reap  
The fruits our little field doth grow,  
Earned, father, in the sweat of thy brow  
With you, while he liveth, it shall stay  
He is good; he will not drive you away



But if we now should let him die,  
Our ruining hasteneth thereby:  
The thought whereof I'll make me give  
My own young life that he may live.  
To such a choice, which profits all,  
Meseems your chiding should be small."

Then the mother broke forth at last,  
Finding her daughter's purpose fast: -  
"Think, my own child, daughter mine, think  
Of the bitter cup that I had to drink,  
Of the pain that I suffered once for thee;  
And, thinking, turn thyself unto me.  
Is this the querdon thou dost give  
Even to the womb that bade thee live?  
Her in pain must I lose again  
Whom I bore and brought forth in pain?  
Wouldst leave thy parents for thy lord?  
Thou wilt be hated of God and <sup>of</sup> his word!  
Clean from thy mind is the word gone  
Which God pronounced? Ponder therein:  
"Listen" (it is written) "to Their command,  
That thy days may be long in the land."



Lo! how corrupt must be thine heart, —  
It hath striven the will of God to thwart.  
And sayest thou, — if thou trust thus  
Thy life, good hap shall come to us?  
Oh no! in us thou wilt give birth  
To weariness and to scorn of earth.  
In the whole world thou art alone  
That which our joy is set upon  
Yes, little daughter, always dear,  
Thou shouldst make our gladness here;  
Thou shouldst be a lamp to our life,  
Our aim in the troublesome hard strife,  
And a staff our falling steps to save:  
In place whereof, thine own black grave  
With thine own hand thou digg'st, and sad  
Grows the hope and the comfort that we had,  
And I must weep at thy tomb all day  
Till in plague and torment I pass away  
Yet <sup>oh! whatever</sup> ~~whatsoever~~ our ills may be,  
So much and more shall God do to thee."

Then the pious maid answered and said: —  
"O mother that in my soul art laid, —



How should I not at all times here  
See the path of my duty clear,  
When at all times my Thankful mind  
Meeteth thy love, tender and kind,  
That kindly and tenderly ministers?  
Of a verity I am young in years;  
Yet this I know: what is mine, to wit,  
Is mine but since thou gavest it.  
And if the people grant me praise  
And look with favour in my face,  
Yet my heart's tale is continual  
That only thee must I thank for all  
Which it pleaseth Thee to perceive in me;  
And that ne'er a thing should be brought to be  
By myself on myself, have such  
As thou wouldst permit without reproach.  
Nay then, it was thou that didst give  
These limbs and the life wherewith I live,  
And is it thou wouldst grudge my soul  
Its white robe and its aureole?  
The knowledge of evil in my breast  
Hath not yet been, nor sin's unrest;  
Therefore, the road being overtrod,





I know I shall have portion with God.  
Say not that this is foolishness;  
No hand but God's hand is in this:  
Him must thou thank, whose ~~grace~~ <sup>grace</sup> doth cleanse  
My heart from earth's desire, till hence  
It longs with a ~~great longing~~ <sup>mighty will</sup> to go  
Ere sin be known that's yet to know.  
Will it needs that the joy of earth  
(Deemed oftentimes of a priceless worth)  
By man should be counted excellent:  
How otherwise might he rest content  
With anything but Christ's perfecting?  
Oh! to such needs let me not cling!  
God knows how vain seem to my sight  
The bliss of this world and the delight;  
For the delight turneth amiss,  
And soul's tribulation hath the bliss.  
What is their life? — a gasp for breath.  
And their gladness? — but the burden of death.  
~~Nothing is sure, save that~~ <sup>One thing alone is sure, ~~if~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~shall~~ <sup>shall</sup> ~~peace~~ <sup>peace</sup>  
Come to-day, with tomorrow it shall cease;  
~~And that~~ <sup>the</sup> last <sup>thing</sup> <sup>at last</sup>  
shall find us out, and our days be past.</sup>



Nor birth nor wealth succoureth them,  
Nor strength, nor the courage of strong men,  
Nor honour, nor fealty, nor truth.

Out and alack! Our life, our youth,  
Are but dust only and empty smoke:  
We are laden branches that the winds rock.

Woe to the fool who layeth hold  
On earth's ~~vanities~~ <sup>vain shadows</sup> which are manifold!  
The marsh-fire gleam as it hath shone  
Still shines, leaving his footsteps on;  
But he is dead ere he reach the goal,  
And with his flesh dieth his soul.

Therefore, dear mother, be at rest,  
And labour not to make manifest  
That for my sake thou wouldst hate me here.  
~~But let one silence make it clear~~  
~~And in thy silence it shall be clear~~

That my father's will <sup>is joined</sup> with thine  
Alas! though I kept this life of mine,  
'Tis verily but a little while

That ye may smile or that I may smile.  
Two years purchase, purchase even there,  
In happiness I shall keep with ye:  
Then must our lord be surely dead,



And sorrow and sighing find us instead;  
And your want shall your will withhold  
From giving me any dowry-gold,  
And no man will take me for his wife;  
And my life shall be trouble-life,  
And very hateful, and worse than death.  
Or though this thing that threateneth  
Were 'scaped, and ere our good lord died  
Some bridegroom chose me for his bride, -  
Though then, ye think, all is made smooth,  
Yet the bad is but made worse, forsooth;  
For war with love, woes should not cease,  
And not to love were the end of peace.  
Thus though ill and grief I struggle still,  
What to attain? Even grief and ill.  
In this strait, One would set me free,  
My soul and my body asking of me,  
That I may be with him where He is.  
Hold me not; I would make myself His.  
He only is the true husbandman;  
The labourer endeth well which He began;  
Ever His plough goeth aright;  
His barns fill; for His fields there is no blight,



In His lands life dies not anywhere;  
Never a child sorroweth there;  
There heat is not, neither is cold;  
There the lapse of years maketh not old;  
But peace hath its dwelling there for aye,  
And abideth, and shall not pass away.  
Thither, yea, thither let me go,  
And be rid of this shadowy place below, -  
This place laid waste like a waste plain,  
Where nothing is but torment and pain;  
Where a day's blight falleth upon  
The work of a year, and it is gone;  
Where ruinous thunder lifts its voice,  
And where the harvest may not rejoice.  
You love me? Oh, let your love be seen;  
And labour no more to circumvent  
My heart's desire for the happy place.  
To the Lord let me lift my face, -  
Even unto Jesus Christ my Friend,  
Whose gracious mercies have no end,  
In whose name Love is the world's dear Lord,  
And by whom not the vilest is abhor'd.  
Alike with him is man's estate, -





As the rich the poor, The small as the great:  
Were I a queen, be sure that He  
With more joy could not welcome me.  
Yet from your hearts do I turn my heart?  
Nay, from your love I will not part,  
But rejoice to be subject unto you.  
Then count not my thought to be untrue  
Because I deem, if I do this thing,  
It is your weal I am furthering.  
Whoso (men say) another's self  
Heaping, pulls weight upon himself, -  
Whoso his neighbor's fame would crown  
By bringing ruin upon his own, -  
His friendship is surely overmuch.  
But this my purpose is none such.  
For though ye too shall gain relief,  
It is myself I would serve in chief.  
O mother dear, weep not nor mourn:  
My duty is this; let it be borne.  
Take heart, - thou hast other children left;  
In theirs thy life shall ~~soon~~ be life beget;  
They shall comfort thee for the loss of me:  
Then my own gain let me bring to be,



And my lords; for to him upon the earth  
This only can be of any worth.

Nor think that thou shalt look on my grave;  
That pain at least thou canst never have:  
Very far away is the land  
Where that must be done which I have planned.  
God-guermeth; in God is my faith;  
He shall loosen me from the bonds of Death.

---



### Part III

All trembling had the parents heard  
Death by their daughter thus preferr'd  
With a language so very marvellous,  
(Surely no child reasoneth thus,)   
Whose words between her lips made stir  
As though the Spirit were poured on her  
Which giveth knowledge of tongues unknown.  
So strange was every word and tone,  
They knew not how they might answer it,  
Except by striving to submit  
To Him who had made the child's heart life  
With the love of death and the scorn of life.  
Therefore they said silently still:  
"All-perfect One, it is Thy will."  
With ~~great~~ fear and doubt's most bitter ban  
They were a-cold; so the poor man  
And the poor woman sat always  
In their bed, without yea or nay.  
Ever a-lack! They had no speech  
The new dawn of their thought to reach.  
With a wild sorrow unexpress'd  
The mother caught the child to her breast:



But the father after long interval  
Said, though his soul smote him withal:  
"Daughter, if God is in thine heart,  
Heed not our grieving, but depart."

Then the sweet maid smiled quietly;  
And soon in the morning hastened she  
To the room where the sick man slept  
Up to his bed she softly stepp'd,  
Saying, "Do you sleep, my dear lord?"

"No, little wife," was his first word,  
But why art thou so early to-day?"

Grief made that I could not keep away,  
The great grief that I have for you."

"God be with thee, faithful and true!  
Often to ease my suffering  
Thou hast done many a gracious thing.  
But it longeth; it shall be always so."

Then said the girl: "On my troth, no!"





Take courage and comfort; - it will turn  
The fire that in your flesh doth burn,  
One means, you know, would quench it.  
My mind climbs to conclusions.

Not a day will I make delay,  
Now I am 'ware of the one way  
Dear Lord, I have heard yourself express  
How, if only a maiden could be found  
To lose her life for you willingly,  
From all your pains you might yet be,  
God He knoweth, I will do this:  
My worth is not as yours, I wis."

Wondering and sore astonish'd,  
The poor sick man looked at the maid  
Whose face smiled down unto his face,  
While the tears gave each other chase  
Over his cheeks from his weary eyes,  
Till he made answer in this wise: -  
"Trust me, This Death is not, my child  
So tender a trouble and so mild  
As then, in thy reckoning, reckonest.  
Thou dost keep madness from my breast



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And the poor woman sat away  
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The great grief that I have for you."

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Thou hast done many a gracious thing.  
But it lasteth; it shall be always so."

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One means, you know, would quench at once.  
My mind climbs to conclusions.  
Not a day will I make delay,  
Now I am 'ware of the one way  
Dear Lord, I have heard yourself expound,  
How, if only a maiden could be found  
To lose her life for you willingly,  
From all your pains you might yet be free.  
God He knoweth, I will do this:  
My worth is not as yours, I wot."

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Whose face smiled down unto his face,  
While the tears gave each other chase  
Over his cheeks from his weary eyes,  
Till he made answer in this wise: -  
"Trust me, This Death is not, my child,  
So tender a trouble and so mild  
As then, in thy reckoning, reckonest.  
Thou dost keep madness from my breast,



And help me when other help was none:  
I thank Thee for all that thou hast done.  
(May God unto thee be merciful  
For thy tenderness in the day of Dole!)  
I know thy mind, childlike and chaste,  
And the innocent spirit that thou hast;  
But nothing more will I ask of thee  
Than thou without wrong mayst do for me.  
Long ago have I given up  
The strife for deliverance and the hope;  
So that now in thy faithfulness  
I pleasure me with a soul at peace,  
Wish not thy sweet life withdrawn  
Sith my own life I have foregone  
Too suddenly, little wife, beside,  
Like a child's, doth thine heart decide  
On this which hath entered into it, —  
Unsure if thou shalt have benefit.  
In little space sore were thy case  
If once with Death thou wert face to face;  
And heavy and dark would the thing seem  
Which thou hast desired in thy dream.  
Therefore, good child, go in again:



Soon, I know, thou wilt count as vain  
This thing to which thy mind is brought,  
When once thou hast pondered in thy thought  
How hard a thing it is to remove  
From the world and from the home of one's love.  
And think too what a grievous smart  
Hereby must come to thy parents' heart,  
And how bitter to them ~~must~~ would be the stroke.  
Shall I bring this thing on the honest folk?  
By whose pity my woes have been beguiled,  
To thy parents' counselling, my child,  
For evermore look that thou incline:  
So sorrow of heart shall not be thine."

When thus he had answered tenderly,  
Forth came the parents, who hard by  
Had harkened to the speech that he spoke.

Albeit his heart was nigh to break  
With the load under which it bowed,  
The father spoke these words aloud:  
"God knows," said he, "we do willingly,  
Dear master, aught that may vantage thee





Who hast been so good to us and so kind.  
If God have in very truth design'd  
That this young child should for thee atone, -  
Then, being God's will, let it be done.  
Yea, through His power she hath been brought  
To count the years of her youth for naught;  
And by no childish whim is she led  
To her grave, as thou hast imagined.  
To-day, alack! is the third day  
That with prayers we might not put away  
She hath sorely entreated us that we  
Would grant her the grace to die for thee  
By her words exceeding wonderful,  
Our sharp resistance hath waxed dull,  
Till now we may no longer dare  
To pause from the granting of her prayer.

When the sick man thus found that each  
Spoke with good faith the selfsame speech,  
And that in earnest the young maid  
Proffered her life for his body's aid, -  
There rose, the little room within,  
Of sobbing and sorrow a great din,



And a strange dispute, that side and this,  
In manner as there seldom is.

The Earl, at length winning unto  
The means of health, raised much ado,  
Loudly lamenting that his cure  
From sickness should be thus made sure.  
The parents grieved with a bitter woe  
That their dear child should leave them so,  
While yet they prayed of him constantly  
To grant her prayer that she should die.  
And she meanwhile, whose life-long years  
It was to cost, shed sorrowful tears,  
For dread lest he whom she would save  
Should deny to her the boon of the grave.

Thus they who, in pure faith's control  
And in the strength of a godly soul,  
Vied one with the other, sat there now,  
Their eyes all wet with the bitter flow,  
Each urging of what he had to say,  
None yielding at all nor giving way.  
The sick man sat in thought a space,  
Between his hands bowing his face,



While the others, with supplicating tone,  
Softly besought him one by one.  
Then his head at last he lifted up,  
And let his tears fall without stop,  
And said finally: "So let it be.  
Shall I, who ~~am~~ am one, stand against Thee?  
~~Now know~~ I surely that God's word,  
Which speaks in silence, ye have heard;  
And that this thing must be very fit,  
And even as God hath appointed it:  
He, seeing my heart, doth read thereon  
That I yield but to Him alone, —  
Not to the wish that for my sake  
Her grave the gracious child should make."

Then the maid sprang to him full fawn,  
As though she had gotten a great gain;  
And both his feet clasped and would keep, —  
Not for sorrow obbing now, but for bliss:  
The while her sorrowing parents went  
Forth from that room to make lament  
And weep apart for the heavy load  
Which yet they knew was the will of God



Then a kirtle was given unto the maid,  
Broidered all with the silken braid,  
Such as never before she had put on;  
With sables the border was bedone,  
And with jewels bound about and around  
On her so fair they were fairer found  
Than song of mine can make discourse  
And they mounted her on a goodly horse  
That horse was to carry her very far,  
Even to the place where the dead are.

In the taking of these gifts, she smil'd.  
Not any longer a silly child  
She seemed, but a worshipful damozel,  
Well-begotten and nurtured well.  
And her face had a quiet earnestness,  
And while she made ready, none the less  
Did she comfort the trouble-stricken pair,  
Who in awestruck wise looked on her then  
As a saintly being superior  
And no daughter unto them any more.





Yet when the bitter moment came  
Wherein their child must depart from them,  
In sooth it was hard to separate.  
The mother's grief was heavy and great,  
Seeing that child lost to her, whom,  
Years since, she had carried in her womb.  
And the father was sorely shaken too,  
Now nought remained but to bid adieu  
To that young life, full of the Spring,  
Which must wither before the blooming.

What made the twain more strong at length  
Was the young girl's wonderful strength,  
Whose calm look and whose gentle word  
Planted the sharp point of the sword.  
With her mouth she was eloquent,  
As if to her ear an angel bent,  
Whispering her that she might say  
The word which wipes all tears away.  
Thus, with her parents' benison  
Upon her head, forth is she gone:—  
She is gone forth like to a bride,  
Lifted and inwardly glorified;



She seemed not as one that journeyeth  
To the door of the house of death.

So they rode without stop or turn  
By the paths that take unto Salerne.  
Lo! he is riding to new life  
Whose countenance is laden and rife  
With sorrow and care and great dismay.  
But for her who rides the charnel-way—  
Oh! up in her eyes sits the bright look  
Which tells of a joy without rebuke.  
With friendly speech, with cheerful jest,  
She toils to give his sorrow rest,  
To lighten the heavy ~~dead~~ time for him  
And ~~shorten~~ shorten the road that was long & grim.

Thus on their way they still did wend  
Till they were come to their journey's end.  
Then prayed she of him that they might meet  
That day the dwelling of the wise leech  
Who had shown how his ill might be allayed.

And it was done even as she said.



His arm in hers, went the sick man  
Unto the great physician,  
And brought again to his mind the thing  
Whereof they had erst made questioning.  
"This maid" (he said) "holds purpose now  
To work my cure, as thy speech did shew."

But the leech held silence, as one doth  
Whose heart to believe is well-nigh clogged  
Even though his eyes witness a thing.  
At length he said: "By whose counselling  
Comes this, my child? Hast thou thought well  
On that whereof thus lord doth tell,  
Or art thou led perforce thereto?"

"Nay," quoth the maid, "that which I do  
I do willingly; none persuadeth me;  
It is, because I choose it should be."

He took her hand, silently all,  
And led her through a door in the wall  
Into another room that was there,  
Wherein he was quite alone with her.



Then thus: "Thou poor ill-guided child,  
What is it that maketh thee so wild,  
Thy short life and thy little breath  
Suddenly to yield up to death?  
An' thou art constrained, e'en say 'tis so,  
And I swear to thee thou art free to go.  
Remember this; - how that thy blood  
Unto the Earl can bring no good  
If thou sheddest it with an inward strife.  
Vain it were to bleed out thy life,  
If still, when the whole hath come to pass,  
Thy lord should be even as he was.  
Belthink thee, - and consider thereof, -  
How the pains thou tempt'st are hard & rough.  
First, with thy limbs naked and bare  
Before mine eyes thou must appear, -  
So needs ~~shall~~ <sup>shall</sup> thy maiden shame be sore:  
Yet still must the woe be more and more,  
What time thou art bound by heel & arm,  
And with sharp heart and with grievous harm  
I cut from out thy breast the part  
That is most alive - even thine heart.  
With thine eyes thou shalt surely see





The knife ere it enter into thee, —  
Thou shalt feel worse than death's worst sting  
Ere the heart be drawn forth quivering.  
How deemest thou? Canst thou suffer this?  
Alack, poor wretch! there is dreadfulness  
Even in the thought. If only once  
Thou do bleach or shrink when the blood runs,  
If thou do repent but by an hair, —  
It is bootless all, — in vain the care,  
In vain the scatter, in vain the death.  
Now what is the word thy free choice saith?"

She looked at him as at a friend,  
And answered: "Sir, unto that end, —  
To wit, my choice, — I had pondered hard  
Long ere I was borne hitherward.  
I thank you, Sir, that of your heart's truth  
You have warned me thus; and of a truth,  
By all the words that you have said  
I well might feel dispirited, —  
The more that ~~to~~ even yourself, men,  
Are frightened by these idle dreams  
From the work you should perform, for the Earl.



Oh! it might hardly grace a girl,  
Such cowardly reasoning to use!  
Pardon me, Sir; I cannot choose  
But laugh, that you with your master  
Should have a courage less firm and deep,  
Than a pitiful maiden without love  
Whose life even now ends and is o'er.  
The part that is yours dare but to do,  
As for me, I have trust to undergo  
Nought like the dule and the dreariness  
You tell me of, must be sharp indeed.  
Sith the mere thought is so troublesome  
Believe me, I never should have come  
Had I not known of myself alone  
What the thing was to be undergone  
Were I not sure that, abashed no was  
This sail of mine could go through with  
You, verily; by your sorrowing,  
My poor heart's courage you can bring  
Just to such sorrowful circumstances  
As though I were going to the dance.  
Worshipped Sir, there nothing is  
That can last away without cease,



Nought that one day's remitted doom  
Can save the feeble body from.  
Thus then, you see, it is cheerfully  
That I do all this; and that while he  
(My lord), you willing, shall not die, -  
The end of life shall be more thereby.  
Resolve you; and so it shall be said  
That the fame you have is well merited.  
This brings me joy that I undertake,  
Even for my dear kind master's sake,  
And for what we two shall gain also, -  
I, there above, - and you, here below.  
Sir, in as much as the work is hard,  
So much the more is our great reward."

Then the leech said nothing, but was dumb;  
And marvelling much, he sought the room;  
Where the sick man sat in expectancy.  
'New courage may be yours,' quoth he,  
For your sake she casts her life behind,  
Not from empty fantasy of the mind;  
And the parting of her body and soul  
Shall cleanse your limbs and make you whole."



But Henry was full of troubled thought;  
Peradventure he harkened not,  
For he answered not, that which was said.  
So the leech turned, and went out again.

Again to the maid did he repair  
And straightway locked the doors with care,  
That Henry might not see or know  
What she for his sake must undergo.  
And the leech said, "Take thy raiment off."  
Then was her heart joyous enough,  
And she obeyed, and in little space  
Stood up before the old man's face  
As naked as God had fashioned her:  
Only her innocence clothed her:  
She feared not and was not ashamed,  
In the sight of God standing unblamed,  
To whom her dear life without price  
She offered up for a sacrifice

When thus she was beheld of the leech,  
His soul spake with an inward speech,  
Saying that beauty so excellent





Had scarce been known since the world went.  
And he conceived for the poor Thing  
Such an unspeakable pitying,  
And such a fear on his purpose lit,  
That he scarce dared to accomplish it.  
Slowly he gave her his command  
To lie down on a table hard at hand  
To the which he bound her with strong cords.  
Then he reached his hand forth afterwards  
And took a broad long knife, and tried  
The edge of the same on either side.  
It was sharp, yet not as it should be.  
(He looked to its sharpness heedfully, -  
Having sore grief for the piteous death,  
And desiring to shorten her death.)  
Therefore it was he took a stone,  
And ground the knife finely thereon.

Earl Henry heard in bitterest woe  
The blade, a-whetting, come and go.  
Forward he sprang; a sudden start  
Of grief for the maid struck to his heart.  
He thought what a peerless soul she bore;



And made a great haste unto the door,  
And would have gone in, but it was shut.  
Then his eyes burned, as he stood without,  
In scalding tears; transfixed  
He felt himself; and in the stead  
Of his feebleness there was mightiness.  
"Shall she," he thought, "who my life doth bless,  
The gracious, righteous, virtuous maid,  
To this end be thrust down to the shade?  
Wilt thou, thou fool, force the Most High,  
That thy desire may come thereby?  
Durst thou that any, for good or ill,  
Can live but a day against His will?  
And if by His will thou yet shalt live,  
What more of help can her dying give?  
Sith all then is as God ordaineth,  
Rest evermore in the hand of faith.  
As in past time, anger not now  
The All-powerful; seeing that thou  
Canst anger Him only. 'Tis the ways  
Of penitence lead unto grace."

He was determined immediately,



And smote on the door powerfully,  
And cried to the leech, "Open to me!"

But the leech answered; "It may not be:  
I have something of weight that I must do."

Then Hurry urged back upon him: "No!  
Come quickly, and open, and give o'er."

Quoth the other: "Say your say through the door."

"Not so, not so; let me enter in:  
It is my soul's rest I would win."

Then the door drew back, widely and well;  
And Hurry looked on the damozel,  
Where she lay bound, body and limb,  
Waiting Death's stroke, to conquer him.

"Hear me," said he, "worshipful Sir;  
It is horrible thus to look on her:  
Rather the burden of God's might  
I choose to suffer, than this sight.  
What I have said, that will I give;  
But let thou the brave maiden live."



## Part IV

When the maiden learned assuredly  
That <sup>by</sup> that death she ~~would~~ was not to die,  
And when she was loosed from the shag beads,  
A sore moan made she. While her hands  
She rent her hair; and such were her tears  
That it seemed a great wrong had been hers!

'Woe worth the weary time!' she cried;  
'There is no pity on any side.  
Woe is me! It fades from my view -  
The recompense I was chosen to, -  
The magnificent heaven-crown  
~~that~~ I hoped with such a hope to put on.  
Now it is I am truly dead, -  
Now it is I am truly ruined.  
O shame and sorrowing on me!  
And shame and sorrowing on Thee,  
Who the queen from my spirit hast given  
And by whose hands I am snatched from Heaven!  
Lo! he chooseth his own calamity,  
That so my crown may be left from me!'





Then with sharp prayer she prayed them there  
That still the Death might be given her  
For the which she had journeyed many a mile.  
But being assured in a brief while  
That the thing she sought would be denied,  
She gazed with a piteous mien, and cried,  
Rebuking her heart-beloved Lord: -  
"Is ~~all~~ then lost that my soul implored?  
How faint art thou, how little brave,  
To load me with this load that I have!  
How have I been cheated with lies  
And cozened with fair-seeming falsities!  
They told me thou wast honest and good,  
And valiant, and full of noble blood, -  
The which, so help me God! was false.  
Thou art one the world strangely miscalls.  
Thou art but a weak timorous man  
Whose soul affrighted fails to scan  
The strength of a woman's sufferance.  
Have I injured thee anyway, perchance?  
Say, how didst thou hear, sitting within?  
And yet meseems the wall was stout  
Betwixt us. Nay, but thou must know



That it is to be — that it will be so.  
Take heed, — there is no second one  
Who yet for thy life will lose her own.  
O turn to me and be pitiful,  
And grudge not death to my poor soul."

But though her suing was hard and hot,  
His firmness never failed him a jot;  
So that at length, against her will,  
She needs must end her cries and be still,  
Yielding her to the loathed decree  
That made her life a necessity.  
Lord Henry to one will was wrought,  
Fast settled in his steadfast thought:  
He clothed her again with his own land,  
And again set forth to his native land,  
Having given large reward to the leech.  
He knew the shame and the evil speech  
And the insult he must bear; yet <sup>more</sup> meekly  
Heekly thrusts; knowing that God  
Had willed, in his regard, each thing  
That wrought for him weal or suffering.



Thus by the damsel's help indeed  
From a foul sickness he was freed, —  
Not from his body's sore and smart,  
But from hardness & stubbornness of heart.  
Then first was all that pride of his  
Quilted overthrown; a better bliss  
Came to his soul and dwelt with him  
Than the bliss he had in the first time; —  
To wit, a blithe heart's priceless gain  
That looks to God through the tears of pain.

But no they rode, the righteous maid  
Mourned and might not be comforted.  
Her soul was aghast, her heart was waste,  
Her wits were all confused and displaced!  
Herself seemed that the leaning on God's might  
Was turned for her to shame and despite:  
So her pure heart ceased not to pray  
That the woe she had might be taken away.

Thus came the girl and the sick knight  
To an hostel at the fall of the night.  
Each in a little chamber alone,



They watched till many hairs were gone.  
The nobleman gave thanks to God  
Who had turned him from the profitless road,  
And cleansed him, by care and suffering,  
From his loftiness and vain-glorying.  
The Damsel went down on her knees  
And spoke to God such words as these: -  
Why thus He had put aside, and left  
Out of His grace, her and her gift; -  
Seeing how she had nothing more  
To give but her one life bare and poor.  
She prayed: "Am I not good enough,  
Thou Holy One, to partake thereof?  
Then, O my God! cleanse Thou mine heart,  
Let me not thus cease and depart;  
Give me a sign, Father of mine,  
That the absolving grace divine  
By seeking may at length be found  
While yet this earth shall hold me round."

And God, who lifts souls from the dust  
Nor turns from the spirit that hath trust -  
The same looked down with looks unclouded





On the troublesome sorrow of them both,  
Both whose hearts and whose life-long days  
He had won to Him for glory and praise, -  
Who had passed through the fire and come forth  
And proved themselves salvation-worth.  
The Father - He who comforteth  
His patient children that have faith -  
At length released these steadfast ones  
From their manifold tribulations.  
In wondrous wise the Earl was stripp'd  
Of all his sickness while he slept;  
And when, as the sunrise smote his eyes,  
He found him once more whole and clean,  
He rose from his couch and sought the maid.

On the sight for which she long had prayed,  
She gazed and gazed some speechless space;  
And then knelt down with lifted face,  
And said: "The Lord God hath done this:  
His was the deed, - the praise be His.  
With solemn thinking let me take  
The life which He hath given me back."

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## Part V

The Earl returned in joyful case  
Unto his fathers' dwelling-place.  
Every day brought back to him  
A part of his joy which had waxed dim;  
And he grew now, of face and mien,  
More comely than ever he had been.  
And unto all who in former years  
Had been his friends and his comforters,  
He told how God's Allmercifulness  
Had delivered him out of his distress.  
And they rejoiced, giving the praise  
To God and His unsearchable ways.

<sup>Then</sup>  
~~Then~~ thitherward full many a good  
Men came, a glad some multitude;  
They came in haste, they rode and they ran,  
To welcome the gallant gentleman;  
Their own eyes they could scarce believe,  
Beholding him in health and alive.  
A strange sight it may well be said,  
When one revives that was counted dead.



The worthy peasant, who so long  
Had tended him when the curse was strong,  
On the good time stayed not away,  
Nor his wife could be brought to stay.  
'Twas then that after long suspense  
Their labour got its recompense.  
They who had hoped no other thing  
Than the sight of their lord, on entering  
Saw the sweet damsel by his side,  
In perfect measure satisfied,  
Who caught them round with either arm  
And clasp'd to them closely and warm.  
Longtime they kiss'd her in good sooth, -  
They kiss'd her on her cheeks and mouth.  
Within their breasts their hearts were light,  
And eyes which first laugh'd & were bright  
Soon overbriam'd with many tears,  
The tokens of the joy that was theirs.

Then the good honest Swabians,  
Who erst had shared the inheritance  
Of the sick lord, gave back the land,  
Unask'd, which they had taken at his hand.



How did they wholly reinstate  
In every title and estate  
That heretofore he had possess'd.  
But ever he pondered in his breast  
Upon those wondrous things which once  
God wrought on his flesh and in his bones.

Nor did he in anywise forget  
The friendly pair whose help, ere yet,  
His hours of pain were overpast,  
Had stood him in such stead. The taste  
Of bitter grief he had brought on them  
Found such reward as best became.  
He gave the little farm and the field,  
With the cattle whereby they were till'd,  
With servants eke, to the honest twain;  
So that no fears plagued them again  
Lest any other lord should come  
At length and turn them from their home.  
Also his thoughtful favour stay'd  
Evermore with the pious maid:  
Many a day with her he spent,  
And gave her many an ornament.





Because of what is said in my rhyme  
And the love he bore her from old time.

Thus, it may be, a year went on:  
Then all his kinsfolk urged him sore,  
Some worthy woman for to woo  
And bring her as his wife thereto.  
And he answered, "Truly, as I live,  
This is good counsel that ye give!"

So he summoned every lord his friend,  
That so to this matter they might lend  
Such help as honest friends can bring.  
And they all came at his summoning,  
Everywhence both far and near;  
And like his whole vassalage was there,  
Not a single man but was come:  
It made, good sooth, a mighty sum.  
And the Earl stepped forward in their sight,  
Saying: "Sirs, my mind is fixed aright  
To wed even as your wills decide:  
Take counsel then, and choose me a bride.  
So they got together and began;





That the life He spared may be made His."

"Then," quoth the Earl, "hearken me this.  
The damozel who standeth here, -  
And whom I embrace, being most dear, -  
She it is unto whom I owe  
The grace it hath pleased God to bestow.  
He saw the simple-spirited  
Earnestness of the holy maid,  
And even in question of her truth  
Gave back to me the joys of my youth  
Which seemed to be lost beyond all doubt.  
And therefore I have chosen her out  
To wed with me, knowing her free.  
I think that God will let this be.  
But now if I fail, and not obtain,  
I will never embrace woman again  
For all I am and all I have  
Is but a gift, Sirs, that she gave.  
Lo! I enjoin ye, with God's will,  
That thus my longing ye fulfil:  
I pray ye all, have but one voice,  
And let your choice go with my choice."



Then the cries ceased and the counter-cries  
And all the battle of advice;  
And every lord, being content  
With Henry's choice, granted assent.

Then the priests came, to bind as one  
Two lives in bridal unison.  
Into his hand they folded hers,  
Not to be loosed in coming years,  
And uttered between man and wife  
God's blessing on the road of their life.

Many a bright and pleasant day  
The twain pursued their steadfast way,  
Till, hand in hand, at length they trod  
Upward to the Kingdom of God.  
Even as it was with them, even thus,  
And quickly, it must be with us.  
To such reward as theirs was then,  
God help us in His hour. Amen.

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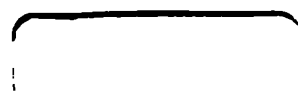








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